

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 /059 W

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R 172019Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3923

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, DR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S SISTER NOMINATED REFORMIST
PARTY CANDIDATE FOR SANTO DOMINGO MAYOR

1. IN YET ANOTHER SURPRISE NOMINATION, EMMA BALAGUER DE VALLEJO, PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S SISTER, WAS CHOSEN MARCH 16 BY GOVERNING REFORMIST PARTY (PR) AS ITS CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF SANTO DOMINGO IN MAY 16 ELECTIONS. SELECTION FOLLOWS UNEXPECTED CHOICE MARCH 14 OF FERNANDO ALVAREZ BOGAERT AS PR VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.

2. "DONA EMMA", AS SHE IS WIDELY KNOWN, IS PUBLIC FIGURE IN OWN RIGHT HAVING HEADED CRUZADA DE AMOR (CRUSADE OF LOVE), POWERFUL POLITICALLY-ORIENTED (PRO-BALAGUER) CHARITY ORGANIZATION, FOR PAST FIVE YEARS. BEFORE SELECTION, IT WAS WIDELY EXPECTED THAT INCUMBENT MAYOR JUAN "PAPI" ESTRELLA ROJAS, WHO HAS HELD POSITION FOR LAST SIX YEARS AND OF LATE CAME TO BE SEEN AS DONA EMMA'S PROTEGE, WOULD BE NOMINATED FOR REELECTION. SEVERAL OTHER CANDIDATES ASPIRED TO SANTO DOMINGO MAYORALTY.

3. SANTO DOMINGO MAYOR'S POSITION IS CONSIDERED THIRD MOST IMPORTANT ELECTIVE OFFICE NATIONALLY DUE TO POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF CAPITAL, AS WELL AS LARGE AMOUNTS OF FUNDS AND NUMBERS OF PUBLIC JOBS AVAILABLE TO MAYOR'S
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OFFICE. CAPITAL IS CONSIDERED VOTING STRONGHOLD OF OPPOSITION DOMINICAN REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PRD), AND DECISION--WHICH IS KNOWN TO BE THAT OF PRESIDENT BALAGUER HIMSELF--NOT TO TAP ESTRELLA APPEARS TO BE DUE TO ESTRELLA'S LACK OF CHARISMA AND POPULAR APPEAL. DONA EMMA, THROUGH CRUZADA'S SOCIAL WELFARE WORK IN SANTO DOMINGO'S POOREST BARRIOS, HER IDENTIFICATION WITH PRESIDENT, AND HER ATTRACTION

TO WOMEN VOTERS, IS VIEWED BY MANY AS REFORMIST CANDIDATE OF
WIDEST APPEAL AND MAY POSE REASONABLE CHALLENGE TO RATHER
LACKLUSTER PRD CANDIDATE, PEDRO FRANCO BADIA. ALTHOUGH
PRD WILL BE DIFFICULT TO BEAT IN CAPITAL, SOME OBSERVERS
BELIEVE DONA EMMA IS CAPABLE OF AT LEAST PULLING MORE VOTES
FOR THE PR TICKET IN THE CAPITAL THAN OTHER PR POSSIBILITIES
FOR THIS OFFICE, THUS AIDING HER BROTHER'S CAMPAIGN.

4. NOMINATION OF DONA EMMA ALSO HAS SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE ASPECTS.
FIRST, THOUGH EMMA'S FACE IS A FAMILIAR ONE, NOMINATION
BARES BALAGUER ADMINISTRATION TO CHARGES OF NEPOTISM. IT
ALSO BELIES SOMEWHAT RECENT CAMPAIGN PLEDGES BY PRESIDENT
THAT HE WOULD OPEN UP HIS ADMINISTRATION IF ELECTED TO NEW
AND YOUTHFUL FIGURES (DONA EMMA IS 67 YEARS OLD) AND INCREASES
CREDIBILITY OF OPPOSITION ARGUMENTS AGAINST CONTINUISMO.
AND FINALLY, THOUGH BALAGUER HAS DONE MUCH TO BRING WOMEN
INTO GOVERNMENT, OLD-FASHIONED MACHISMO CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED
AS A FACTOR WORKING AGAINST A WOMAN CANDIDATE FOR
A SERIOUS ELECTION OFFICE.

5. IMMEDIATE REACTION TO BALAGUER'S LATEST ELECTION
CAMPAIGN MOVE, ASIDE FROM SURPRISE AND SOME AMUSEMENT, IS
SOMEWHAT MUTED. "SILENT MAJORITY", WHICH HAS BECOME
POPULAR PHRASE IN CAMPAIGN, WILL DECIDE ULTIMATE IMPORT
OF THESE EVENTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MAYOR, ELECTION CANDIDATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANTO01478
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780121-0481
Format: TEL
From: SANTO DOMINGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780354/aaaabtms.tel
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Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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Review Exemptions: n/a
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